Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend, cancel and add claims as per the following listing of claims that will replace all prior version, and listings, of claims in the application. For the Examiner's convenience applicant has included a copy of the claims without markup as Appendix A that follows page 24.

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for managing and tracking information items within ~~an~~ a message-based system on a user system, the message-based system having a viewer, the method comprising the operations of:

    (a)   generating a thrask, the thrask comprising a collection that associates a plurality of information items, ~~, the thrask including~~ at least one information item in the plurality of information items having a first set of metadata, the collection capable of associating a document information item and a message information item;

    (b)   sorting a new information item into the thrask in accordance with at least one criterion responsive to the first set of metadata, the new information item having a second set of metadata; and

    (c)   displaying, in the viewer, the thrask and at least one displayed metadataum selected from the first set of metadata or the second set of metadata ~~of the metadata of one of the information items in the thrask in the viewer~~.

2. (currently amended) The method of ~~c~~Claim 1 further comprising the operation of:

    (d)   updating at least one of the metadata ~~of one of the information items in the thrask~~ in the first set of metadata.

3. (currently amended) The method of ~~c~~Claim 1, wherein operations (a), (b) and (c) are embedded in the message-based system.

4.(currently amended) The method of c~~C~~laim 1, wherein the new~~an~~ information item ~~included in the thrask is either a message or~~is a new message~~document~~.

5.(currently amended) The method of c~~C~~laim ~~4~~ 1, wherein the new information item is a new document, and wherein the new document ~~originates from one of the following: a document~~is attached to a new message, ~~a document residing~~is stored on the user system or ~~a document~~is accessible by the user system over a network.

6.(currently amended) The method of c~~C~~laim 1, wherein the first set of metadata ~~of an information item included in the thrask are~~comprises task-related information.

7.(currently amended) The method of c~~C~~laim 6, wherein the task-related information~~metadata of the information item~~ ~~include~~comprises~~at least one of~~ a deadline~~and a reminder~~.

8.(currently amended) The method of c~~C~~laim ~~7~~ 6, wherein the task-related information comprises a specified date and wherein operation (c) further comprises ~~the operation of~~displaying a notification when the~~a~~ specified date ~~for a reminder or a deadline~~arrives.

9.(currently amended) The method of c~~C~~laim ~~7~~ 8, wherein operation (c) further comprises ~~the operation of~~displaying a dialog box configured to receive a response ~~when a specified date for a reminder or a deadline arrives, the dialog box allowing a user to select one of a plurality of options~~.

10.(currently amended)   The method of c~~C~~laim ~~7~~ 1, wherein the first set of metadata includes a first specified date, the second set of metadata includes a second specified date, and wherein operation (c) further comprises determining a nearest specified date responsive to the first and second specified dates, and ~~the operation of~~displaying an indicator ~~associated with the thrask for~~responsive to the ~~a~~

nearest specified date ~~for a deadline or a reminder associated with one of the information items in the thrask~~.

11.(currently amended)   The method of ~~c~~Claim 10, wherein the indicator changes in appearance as the nearest specified date gets closer.

12.(currently amended)   The method of ~~c~~Claim 1, wherein operation (a) is performed in response to a user action performed on an information item.

13.(currently amended)   The method of ~~c~~Claim 12, wherein the viewer includes a thrask-viewing pane ~~displaying a set of thrasks~~ and wherein the user action comprises the action of manually dragging ~~an~~ the at least one information item into the thrask-viewing pane.

14.(currently amended)   The method of ~~c~~Claim 1, wherein operation (a) comprises ~~the operation of~~ automatically generating a new thrask when a predetermined criterion is satisfied.

15.(currently amended)   The method of ~~c~~Claim 1, wherein the new information item is a new message, the at least one information item is a prior message, and the at least one criterion is that the new message is a response to the prior message. ~~operation (b) comprises the operation of automatically sorting a new message into the thrask when the new message is a response to a message already included in the thrask~~.

16.(currently amended)   The method of ~~c~~Claim 1, wherein operation (b) is performed in response to a user action, the user action including the action of manually dragging ~~an~~ the new information item into a visual display of the thrask.

17.(Canceled)

18.(currently amended)   The method of cClaim 1, wherein the viewer comprises a thrask-viewing pane and an item list pane, and wherein operation (c) further comprises the operation of displaying a set of thrasksthe thrask in the thrask-viewing pane and of displaying the at least one displayed metadataum in the item list pane in the item list pane a set of information items associated with a thrask selected from the set of thrasks.

19.(currently amended)   The method of cClaim 18 1, wherein the viewer further comprises a content viewing pane and wherein operation (c) further comprises the operation of displaying in the content viewing pane the content of an information itemone of the plurality of information items selected from a set of information items associated with a thrask selected from the set of thrasks.

20.(currently amended)   The method of cClaim 1, wherein operation (c) further comprises the operation of displaying a mark indicating an obligation associated with one of the plurality of information items in the thrask, the obligation being user-defined.

21.(currently amended)   The method of cClaim 1, wherein operation (c) further comprises the operation of displaying a group of marks indicating obligations associated with the thrask, the obligations being user-defined, the group of marks corresponding to some two or more of the plurality of information itemsthe information items included in the thrask.

22.(currently amended)   The method of cClaim 21, wherein, in the display of a first subset of the group of marks represent, marks indicating obligations of the a user are distinct from marks indicating and a second subset of the group of marks represent obligations of correspondents of the user.

23.(currently amended)   The method of cClaim 1, wherein the first set of metadata includes one or more of a "From:" entry, a "To:" entry and a "Cc:" entry, and

wherein operation (c) <u>further</u> comprises ~~the operation of~~ displaying, ~~upon user selection of an option, all~~ <u>one or more</u> names that appear in <u>any of the</u>~~the~~ "From:" entry, <u>the</u> "To:" <u>entry</u> or <u>the</u> "Cc:" <u>entry.</u> ~~lines of an information item that is associated with an obligation.~~

24.(currently amended)   The method of <u>c</u>~~C~~laim 1, wherein ~~operation (c)~~ <u>displaying the thrask is responsive to a display condition and wherein operation (c) further</u> ~~further~~ comprises ~~the operations of:~~ <u>determining the thrask display condition responsive to a user-specified date and a deferral option.</u>

~~deferring a display of the thrask until a user-specified date in response to a user-selection of a first deferral option; and~~

~~deferring a display of an information item included in the thrask until a user-specified date in response to a user-selection of a second deferral option.~~

25.(currently amended)   The method of <u>c</u>~~C~~laim ~~24~~ <u>1</u>, wherein operation (c) further comprises ~~the operations of~~:

<u>determining an information item display condition responsive to a user-specified date and a deferral option; and</u>

<u>displaying the at least one displayed metadataum responsive to the information item display condition.</u>

~~displaying a deferred thrask in response to a user request to see the deferred thrask.; and~~

~~displaying a deferred information item in a thrask in response to a user request to see the deferred information item.~~

26.(currently amended)   A system for managing and tracking information items within a message-based system on a user system, the message-based system including ~~an~~ viewer, the system comprising:

(a)   a thrask generating module <u>configured to generate</u>~~generating~~ a thrask, the thrask <u>comprising a collection that associates a plurality of information items,</u>

~~including~~ at least one information item <u>in the plurality of information items</u> having a <u>first</u> set of metadata<u>, the collection capable of associating a document information item and a message information item</u>;

(b)   a sorting module ~~sorting~~<u>configured to sort</u> a new information item into the thrask in accordance with at least one criterion <u>responsive to the first set of metadata, the new information item having a second set of metadata</u>; and

(c)   a display module ~~displaying~~<u>configured to display</u> the thrask and at least one <u>displayed metadataum selected from the first set of metadata or the second set of metadata</u>~~of the metadata of one of the information items in the thrask in the viewer~~.

27.(currently amended)   The system of ~~C~~<u>c</u>laim 26 further comprising:

(d)   an updating module ~~updating~~<u>configured to update</u> at least one of the metadata <u>in the first set of metadata</u> ~~of one of the information items in the thrask~~.

28.(currently amended)   The system of ~~C~~<u>c</u>laim 26<u>,</u> wherein the thrask-generating module, the sorting modules and the display module are embedded in the message-based system.

29.(currently amended)   The system of ~~C~~<u>c</u>laim 26<u>,</u> wherein ~~an~~<u>the new</u> information ~~item included in the thrask is either a message or a document~~<u>is a new message</u>.

30.(currently amended)   The system of ~~C~~<u>c</u>laim ~~29~~ <u>26,</u> wherein <u>the new information item is a new document, and wherein</u> the <u>new</u> document <u>is</u> ~~originates from one of the following: a document~~ attached to a <u>new</u> message, ~~a document residing~~<u>is</u> stored on the user system or ~~a document~~<u>is</u> accessible by the user system<u>over a network</u>.

31.(currently amended)   The system of ~~C~~claim 26, wherein the first set of metadata ~~of an information item included in the thrask are~~comprises task-related information.

32.(currently amended)   The system of ~~C~~claim 31, wherein the ~~metadata of the information item~~task-related information ~~include~~comprise ~~at least one of~~a deadline ~~and a reminder~~.

33.(currently amended)   The system of ~~C~~claim ~~32~~ 31, wherein the task-related information comprises a specified date, and wherein the display module ~~displays~~ is configured to display a notification when ~~a~~the specified date ~~for a reminder or a deadline~~arrives.

34.(currently amended)   The system of ~~C~~claim ~~32~~ 33, wherein the display module ~~displays~~is configured to display a dialog box configured to receive a response ~~when a specified date for a reminder or a deadline arrives, the dialog box allowing a user to select one of a plurality of options~~.

35.(currently amended)   The system of ~~C~~claim ~~32~~ 26, wherein the first set of metadata includes a first specified date, the second set of metadata includes a second specified date, and wherein the display module further comprises a date-comparison module configured to determine a nearest specified date from the first and second specified dates, the display module configured to display~~displays~~ an indicator ~~associated with the thrask for~~responsive to the ~~a~~ nearest specified date ~~for a deadline or a reminder associated with one of the information items in the thrask~~.

36.(currently amended)   The system of ~~C~~claim 35, wherein the indicator changes in appearance as the nearest specified date gets closer.

37.(currently amended)   The system of ~~Cc~~laim 26, wherein the thrask-generating module activates in response to a user action performed on an information item.

38.(currently amended)   The system of ~~Cc~~laim 37, wherein the viewer includes a thrask-viewing pane ~~displaying a set of thrasks~~ and wherein the user action comprises the action of manually dragging ~~an~~ the at least one information item into the thrask-viewing pane.

39.(currently amended)   The system of ~~Cc~~laim 26, wherein the thrask-generating ~~module~~ module is configured to automatically ~~generates~~ generate a new thrask when a predetermined criterion is satisfied.

40.(currently amended)   The system of ~~Cc~~laim 26, wherein the new information item is a new message, the at least one information item is a prior message, and the at least one criterion is that the new message is a response to the prior message ~~the sorting module automatically sorts a new message into the thrask when the new message is a response to a message already included in the thrask~~.

41.(currently amended)   The system of ~~Cc~~laim 26, wherein the sorting module activates in response to a user action, the user action including the action of manually dragging ~~an~~ the new information item into a visual display of the thrask.

42.(currently amended)   The system of ~~Cc~~laim 26, wherein the sorting module is further configured to provide ~~provides to the user~~ a suggestion ~~of which thrask to put~~ that the new information item be sorted into the thrask ~~into, when there is more than one thrasks~~.

43.(currently amended)   The system of ~~Cc~~laim 26, wherein the viewer comprises a thrask-viewing pane and an item list pane, and wherein the display module is further configured to display ~~displays a set of thrasks~~ the thrask in the thrask-viewing pane and to display ~~displays~~ the at least one displayed metadataum in the

item list pane ~~in the item list pane a set of information items associated with a~~ ~~thrask selected from the set of thrasks~~.

44.(currently amended)   The system of ~~C~~claim ~~43~~ 26, wherein the viewer further comprises a content viewing pane and wherein the display module is configured to display ~~displays~~ in the content viewing pane the content of ~~an information item~~ ~~selected from a set of information items associated with a thrask selected from the~~ ~~set of thrasks~~one of the plurality of information items.

45.(currently amended)   The system of ~~C~~claim 26, wherein the display module is further configured to display~~displays~~ a mark ~~indicating~~to indicate an obligation associated with one of the plurality of information items ~~in the thrask, the~~ ~~obligation being user-defined~~.

46.(currently amended)   The system of ~~C~~claim 26, wherein the display module displays a group of marks indicating obligations associated with the thrask, the obligations being user-defined, the marks corresponding to some of the information items included in the thrask.

47.(currently amended)   The system of ~~C~~claim 46, wherein, ~~in the display of~~ a first subset of the group of marks represent~~, marks indicating~~ obligations of ~~the~~ a user ~~are distinct from marks indicating~~and a second subset of the group of marks represent obligations of correspondents of the user.

48.(currently amended)   The system of ~~C~~claim 26, wherein the first set of metadata includes one or more of a "From:" entry, a "To:" entry and a "Cc:" entry, and wherein the display module is further configured to display~~displays, upon user~~ ~~selection of an option, all~~ one or more names that appear in any of the "From:" entry, the "To:" entry or the "Cc:" entry ~~lines of an information item that is~~ ~~associated with an obligation~~.

49.(currently amended)   The system of ~~C~~claim 26, wherein the display module is responsive to a display condition and further comprises a deferral module configured to determine the display condition responsive to a user-specified date and a deferral option~~defers a display of the thrask until a user-specified date in response to a user selection of a first deferral option and wherein the display module defers a display of an information item included in the thrask until a user-specified date in response to a user selection of a second deferral option~~.

50.(currently amended)   The system of ~~C~~claim ~~49~~ 26, wherein the display module is configured to condition display of the at least one displayed metadataum responsive to an information item display condition and further comprises a deferral module configured to determine the information item display condition responsive to a user specified date and a deferral option. ~~displays a deferred thrask in response to a user request to see the deferred thrask and wherein the display module displays a deferred information item included in a thrask in response to a user request to see the deferred information item.~~

51.(new)   The method of claim 6, wherein the task-related information comprises a reminder.